MARVEL COMICS
ELEKTRA
CROSSES SWORDS WITH
SHANG-CHI AND THE KINGPIN!
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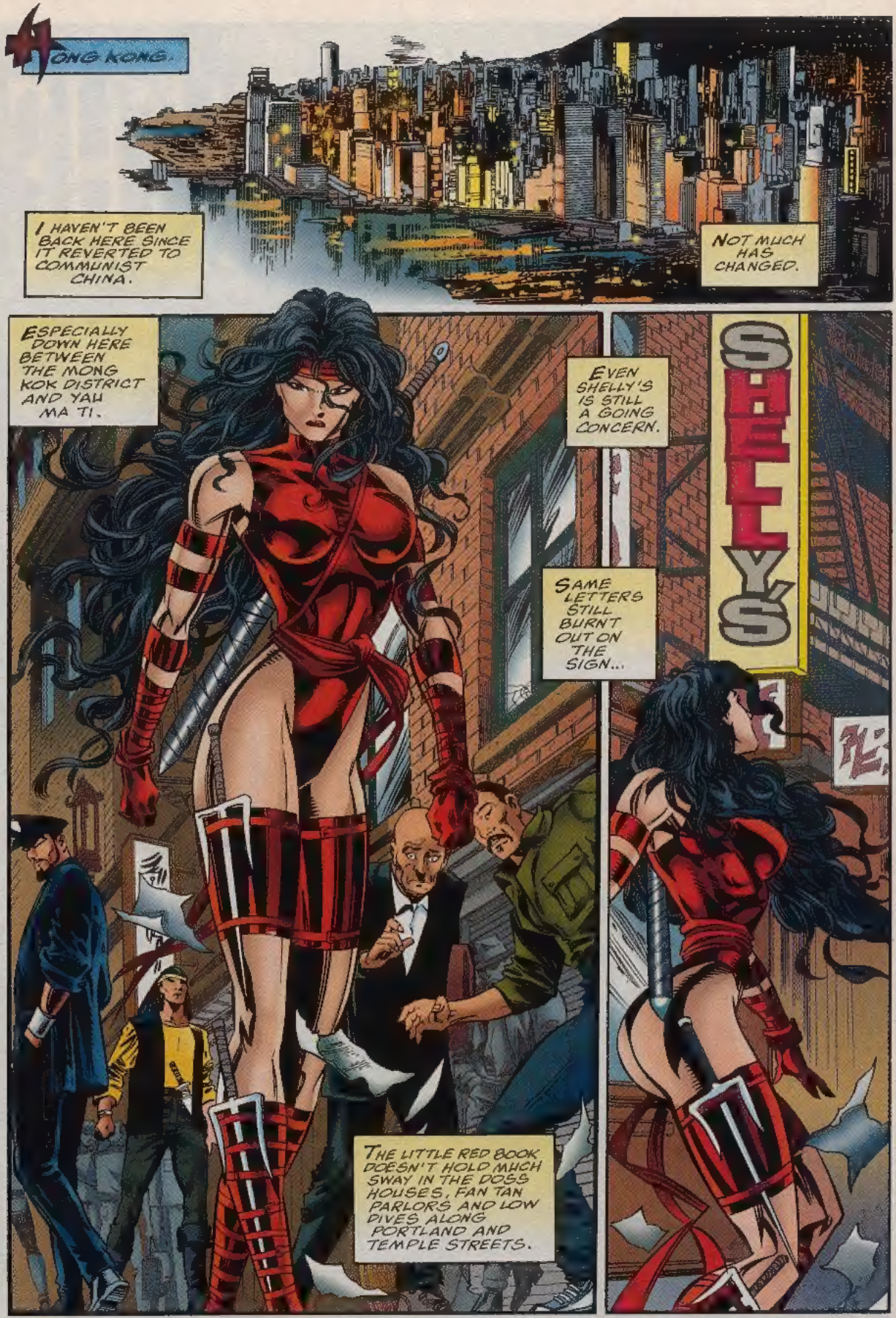

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THE ONLY THING I WANT WHISPERED IN MY EAR IS THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE LOW-BORN DOGS WHO CALL THEMSELVES THE FIVE.
THE F-F-FIVE??
AIIEEEE
--YOU'RE LETTING IN THE FLIES.
CLOSE THE DOOR, YOU INCONSIDERATE COW--

FWWIPPP
ONE SHOULD ALSO BE MORE DISCREET IN BANDYING ABOUT THE NAME OF THE FIVE...
...YOU ARE BOUND TO AROUSE HOSTILITY IN THOSE WHO ARE MORE ADEPT IN THE ARTS THAN YOU.
WHOOOOOOSSSSH
I AM NOT IMPRESSED.
A CLEAN DECAPI-TATION...
...YOU HAVE TALENT, WOMAN, EVEN IF YOU ARE IMPERTINENT.

AND JUST WHAT BUSINESS DO YOU HAVE WITH THE FIVE?...
...THOSE FACELESS, RECONDITE, HIGH MUCKY-MUCKS OF THAT ARCANE ORDER OF ASSASSINS KNOWN AS THE HAND!
whhzzzz
Oh?
PING
PING
AND WHY SHOULD THAT BE OF ANY CONCERN TO YOU--
--UNLESS YOU, YOURSELF--
--WERE AN AGENT OF THE HAND!
FOOOSH
A SCATHING ACCUSATION...
THUMPP
...FROM ONE WHO WAS KNOWN AS AN ASSASSIN OF THE HAND HERSELF!

THUNK THUNK
IS THAT SO, ELEKTRA?
WHUMP
I WAS ONE OF THEM...
...BUT I DID NOT BELONG TO THEM.
FWAP
FWAP
A RATHER FINE DETAIL, IS IT NOT?
GOD LIVES IN THE DETAILS.
MIES VAN DER ROHE SAID THAT.
ARE YOU TAKING TO QUOTING DEAD ARCHITECTS, ELEKTRA?
THIP
THUP
THIP THIP THIP THIP THIP THIP

AND ARE YOU TAKING TO HAUNTING SCURVY SALOONS, SHANG-CHI, MASTER OF KUNG FU?
OUR PATHS HAVE NOT CROSSED SINCE OUR ENCOUNTER WITH GHOSTMAKER!
YOU MANAGED TO STICK A SAI IN ME THAT TIME, ELEKTRA...
IT WASN'T SO EASY FOR YOU, NOW THAT I KNOW YOUR TRICKS, EH? AND YOU ARE WRONG--
--OUR PATHS DID CROSS AFTER THAT--
TOUCHÉ.
OH, I DON'T COUNT YOUR SUPPOSEDLY SURREPTITIOUS SURVEILLANCE IN NEW YORK.

LATER...
I GAVE UP THE WAYS OF DECEIT AND DEATH TO FIND MY OWN PEACE, ELEKTRA...
BUT LATELY, EVENTS HAVE BEEN DRAWING ME BACK INTO WHAT KIPLING CALLED "THE GREAT GAME."
I CAME BACK TO HONG KONG WITH A GROUP OF MUTANTS TO STOP A GREAT EVIL.
ONE OF THE MUTANTS WAS A SHAMBLING BEAST--A BEAST WITH A GREAT HEART AND A WILL OF... ADAMANTIUM.
THAT WOULD BE LOGAN.
THEY CALL HIM WOLVERINE.
YOU KNOW THIS ONE?
IN PASSING.

SO, HOW IS IT, ELEKTRA...
...THAT YOU WERE ONE OF THE HAND, YET DID NOT BELONG TO THEM?
whupwhupwhupwhupwhup
I JOINED THE HAND UNDER FALSE PRETENSES TO PROVE TO THE CHASTE THAT I WAS WORTHY.
SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY, THINGS WENT AWRY.
LIKE YOU I HAD TO TRY AND FIND MY OWN WAY.
I HAD TAKEN IN A YOUNG WARD NAMED NINA, WHOSE FATHER WAS KILLED BY BULLSEYE...
...THE HAND SENT KUROYAMA, A DEAD MAN WHO WALKS. HE RIPPED HER HEART OUT. TORE IT FROM HER CHEST AND TOOK IT WITH HIM.!
THE HAND SAID IT WAS PARTIAL PAYMENT FOR MY DEBT TO THEM.
LOGAN AND I RAIDED A DEN OF HAND NINJAS IN THE EAST VILLAGE OF NEW YORK CITY...

...THEY TOLD ME UNDER EXTREME DURESS THAT THE REASON I CAN'T FEEL CERTAIN THINGS THE WAY I USED TO WAS BECAUSE I WAS MISSING SOMETHING...
...THAT WHEN THE HAND BROUGHT ME BACK FROM DEATH AND PUT THE LIFE THAT HAD BEEN TAKEN FROM ME BACK INSIDE -- THEY LEFT SOMETHING OUT!
BEFORE THE NINJA DIED, HE SAID THAT WHAT WAS STOLEN FROM ME COULD BE FOUND IN THE HAND STRONGHOLD IN CENTRAL JAPAN.
BUT WHAT I FOUND THERE WERE MORE TRAPS AND A CLUE THAT LED ME HERE TO HONG KONG.
A WHISPER OF THE FIVE.
THERE WAS ANOTHER WHISPER OF THE FIVE ON THE WIND THIS EVENING.
A VERY PRIVATE BANQUET ON YON FLOATING PLEASURE PALACE TO CELEBRATE SOME SECRET VICTORY...

A CELEBRATION, YOU SAY...?
TOO QUIET FOR THAT!
AND WHY NO GUARDS?
THOSE STATUES DEPICT THE GUARDIANS OF THE CELESTIAL JADE EMPEROR..
MAYHAP THE HAND FEELS THAT IS ALL THE PROTECTION THEY REQUIRE.
THOSE AREN'T STATUES!
THE LO-FAN SHE-DOG KNOWS!

THE TIME FOR PRETENSE IS OVER!
DEATH TO THE INTERLOPERS!
SI FAN NINJAS, MASKED BY HOLOGRAPHIC PROJEC-TIONS!
THEY ARE ADEPT KILLERS BUT NOT OF THE HAND!
SHAK
SHUNK
THIS EXPLAINS THE FUJIKAWA CORPORATION HELICOPTER THAT PASSED US ON THE WAY OVER!
chwap!
KRAK

HOW SO?
FUJIKAWA IS A FRONT FOR A CRIMINAL ORGANIZATION..
YOU KNOW HIM, OF COURSE
WHAM
'MAN? MEN SMOKE BUT..."
EXACTLY
WITH NEFARIOUS TIES THAT INCLUDED MY OWN LATE FATHER!

COME IN AND HELP YOURSELVES. PLENTY LEFT OVER
I'M AFRAID MY FIVE OTHER GUESTS HAD TO LEAVE EARLY; A FULL CALENDAR, YOU KNOW.
YOU SHOULD START WITH THE COLD JELLYFISH.
KINGPIN!
I KNEW THIS ONE WAS AFFILIATED WITH FUJIKAWA AS OF LATE..
..BUT I HAD HEARD HE RETURNED TO NEW YORK TO PICK UP WHERE HE LEFT OFF!
SIMPLY TYING UP LOOSE ENDS.
THINGS HAVE A WAY OF UNRAVELING UNLESS YOU'RE TIDY ABOUT LOOSE ENDS.
THE FIVE ARE TOO POWERFUL TO OFFEND BLATANTLY, BUT I FIND SOME OF THEIR ENDEAVORS TO BE EXCESSIVELY WASTEFUL OF PRECIOUS RESOURCES...

.. AND A BIT TOO LURIDLY MELODRAMATIC.
FINAL DAILY BUGLE FINAL
NEW YORK'S FINEST DAILY NEWSPAPER
GANG WAR ESCALATES
SUCH HUBRIS ON THE PART OF THE FIVE. THEY ACTUALLY BOASTED OF THIS TO ME.
THAT THEY WERE MEDDLING IN MY OWN BAILIWICK, UPSETTING THE HIERARCHIES OF CRIME TO SUIT THEIR OWN NEFARIOUS PURPOSES.
.WHILE THEY FETED ME TO CELEBRATE A FEW PALTRY ASSASSI-NATIONS, COUP D'ETATS, AND HOSTILE TAKEOVERS.
THESE GANG MURDERS -- THEY CAN'T STILL BE TRYING TO PIN THEM ON ME, CAN THEY?
HAVEN'T BEEN KEEPING UP WITH THE HOMETOWN PAPERS, HAVE YOU, ELEKTRA...?

...OR YOU WOULD KNOW ABOUT THE LATEST EXCLUSIVE PHOTOS.
WHAT? THIS WAS TAKEN YESTERDAY!
I WAS STILL IN TRANSIT FROM TOKYO!
OBVIOUSLY, THE HAND HAS INSERTED A DOPPEL-GANGER.
THE FIVE BOASTED THAT THIS NEW ASSASSIN OF THEIRS WAS EVEN BETTER THAN KUROYAMA.
THEY MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT "COMPLETING THE CIRCLE."
WHY WOULD YOU GIVE UP THIS INFORMATION ON YOUR PARTNERS IN CRIME?
BECAUSE GOOD PARTNERS DON'T MAKE MESSES IN EACH OTHER'S BACK-YARDS.

I BELIEVED HIM
HIS REASONS FOR DIVULGING THE INFORMATION WERE ALL SELF-SERVING, AND THAT WAS TRUE TO CHARACTER.
TWO DAYS LATER, I AM BACK IN NEW YORK CITY
IN AN OFFICE TOWER THAT HOUSES THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE BABYLON TOWERS CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION CORPORATION.
THE KINGPIN SAID THAT BTC&D WAS THE COVER FOR THE MOB THAT WAS MUSCLING IN ON HIS TURF.
THE FIVE HAD MENTIONED THAT THEY WOULD "TAKE CARE OF IT"
EEEEE
IT IS BEING TAKEN CARE OF IN AN EGREGIOUSLY HEAVY-HANDED MANNER...
JUDGING BY THE SCREAMS OF THE FLEEING SECRETARY AND THE COPPERY TANG OF BLOOD IN THE AIR.

SOUNDS FROM THE OFFICE DOWN THE HALL...
SCUFFLING, HEAVY BREATHING, THE MUFFLED SOUNDS OF TERROR--
SLAMM
HE WAS DYING BEFORE HE CAME THROUGH THE DOOR

THE OFFICE BEHIND HIM IS A CHARNEL HOUSE
THIS IS THE LAIR OF THE BIG BOSS, TU-TONE TOMMY TIPARILLO .
..WHO IS NOW PINNED TO HIS EXECUTIVE CHAIR LIKE A MOTH ON A DISPLAY CARD
THE BROKEN WINDOW..
.. IS THIS THE EGRESS POINT OF THE KILLER?
NO!
THE KILLER IS STILL HERE!

SKRAK
SLASSH
SHE'S AS FAST AS I AM, AND SEEMINGLY AS SKILLED!
TURN AND FACE ME, IMPOSTER!
WITH PLEASURE, ELEKTRA.

WHAT'S THE MATTER?
AREN'T YOU HAPPY TO SEE ME?
NINA--! BUT-- YOU'RE DEAD!
I SAW KUROYAMA RIP OUT YOUR HEART!!
THEY PUT IT BACK...
...AND SOMETHING ELSE AS WELL!

SAI'D BAR

POLLY WATSON
ASSISTANT EDITOR

BOBBIE CHASE
EDITOR

BOB HARRAS
CHIEF

Dear ELEKTRA team,

ELEKTRA #13 was a well-worked wrap-up to Peter Milligan's run on this title. His thirteen regular issues and one Flashback issue work as a reasonably complete storyline on their own with this month's final split from Daredevil adding a nice sense of closure to that part of Elektra's troubled past. Plotlines elsewhere all tied up neatly. I've never been a great fan of Peter Milligan's super hero-related work, but his ELEKTRA run has come as something of a pleasant surprise to me, particularly the way that it's built on Marvel history and continuity, as this very issue so ably demonstrated.

The strength of issue #13 was in showing that, regardless of the significant change in Elektra's ethics, her lifestyle and that of Matt Murdock's are still totally incompatible. To Matt the law is everything and Elektra's willingness to participate in the American Samurai's ritual suicide means that however far she might have come in recent months, there is still a huge chasm between Matt and Elektra that just can't be crossed. The bittersweet conclusion to this issue (and Peter's run) allowed Elektra to come full circle, finally--albeit reluctantly--allowing her to put the specter of Daredevil behind her and move on.

As for the future, though, things don't look quite so rosy. The supporting cast have helped make this comic the enjoyable read it is and, while it's only fair to at least give Larry Hama a couple of issues before I pass judgment for good, I have to say that the idea of butchering Nina seems unnecessary and wholly distasteful to me. What a waste of a decent supporting character. Especially one who had so effectively worked as a catalyst in bringing out aspects of Elektra's character we hadn't seen before.

Well done on an enjoyable first fourteen issues even if I don't stick around for the next fourteen. Cheers.

Andy Oliver
Upminster, Essex
ENGLAND

Thanks, Andy! We're glad you enjoyed the first year or so of ELEKTRA. Peter established a lot of great aspects to Elektra's personality and her new life, and we hope you'll stick around long enough to see how Larry expands on what Peter's established. And you never know what cool things Larry will establish himself--trust us, you'll enjoy it!

Dear *Sai'd Bar*,

Hi! I'm normally not an Elektra fan, but I love seeing her and Daredevil together, so I bought the American Samurai trilogy. I loved them all. I will buy and consume anything love-related involving Daredevil and Elektra. Heck, it doesn't even have to be love-related!

Mike Deodato, Jr. is absolutely fabulous. Peter Milligan is extremely cool, too. If I could draw or write like that, you would have heard from me before now. Well, thanks for listening to me. I just needed to say that.

Elizabeth McAdams
(Address withheld by request)

Not a problem, Elizabeth! We enjoyed hearing it just as much as you needed to say it! We're glad Peter and Mike entertained you with their tales, and we hope you and everyone else out there have as good a time with Larry on the book!

Dear *Sai'd Bar*,

I have just finished reading ELEKTRA #13, American Samurai Part 3. I don't usually write many letters to you at Marvel, but this time I just couldn't help myself. I believe this issue is one of the most beautiful ones I've ever read. Not just out of ELEKTRA, but out of all the Marvel comics! There's a magnificent beauty found in this issue that not everyone would see and understand. The honorable death of the American Samurai was so pure, and it's very good to see that Elektra didn't have to slice his sword through his neck for it to be so.

The definite highlight of the issue was the end, where we saw the statue--the place where the two reborn lovers would meet, deserted in the pouring rain. Daredevil and Elektra , who had given in to their hearts despite how wrong it was, leaving their love once again behind them. A love that could never be, no matter how much they wanted it.

Maybe my letter's a little too much, but I can't remember ever reading something so beautiful. I wonder if anything will ever strike me the way Seppuku did. Even though the cover wasn't true to the story, this book was amazing and whatever doubt I had about Elektra is now gone.

Thank you.
Lucy (Harley) Bradbury
Hamilton, Ontario
CANADA

Thank you, Lucy! It's great that we could affect you in such a positive way! It seems Elektra and Matt have finally resolved their issues with each other. Now Elektra can move forward and deal with the here and now, instead of dwelling on what was or what might have been. But that doesn't mean her life is going to get boring. Trust us, what Larry's got in store for Elektra is gonna take us all on one heck of a ride!

NEXT ISSUE:

THE HAND HAS BROUGHT BACK NINA (NO, REALLY!), AND THEY'RE INTENT ON USING HER AGAINST THEIR FORMER DISCIPLE--ELEKTRA! CAN ELEKTRA BRING HERSELF TO HARM ONE OF HER BEST FRIENDS--EVEN IN SELF-DEFENSE?

DESIGN BY COMICRAFT

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MARK E-MAIL "OKAY TO PRINT"

MAYBE IT WAS ALWAYS INTENTIONAL.
THE CLIENTELE HAS REMAINED REMARKABLY CONSISTENT.
AND NE'ER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET
REJECTS FROM DANTE'S NINTH CIRCLE.
HEY, GIRLIE! YOU WID THE SAXS--
--HOWS ABOUT YOU SLIDE ONTO MY LAP AN' LEMME WHISPER SWEET NUTTINS IN YER EAR!
LARRY HAMA WRITER
MIKE DEODATO JR. ARTIST
SCOTT KOBLISH INKS
CHRISTIE SCHEELE COLORS
&
JACK MORELLI LETTERS
BOBBIE CHASE EDITOR
BOB HARRAS CHIEF